Dear Mum & Dad,

Here I am with the second part of my Palestine letter. For the first three days in camp, I took walks about the place to see where everything was. We found it a well-appointed camp with every sort of convenience. There were two cinemas for concerts & talkies, one indoor and one out of doors; a library, tennis courts, barber, bootmaker, several N.A.A.F.I's (Navy, Air Force & Army institutions) where we can always get a meal, buy tobacco, coal & other necessary articles. There was also a district or nativc laundry where our washing was done. The Camp was free to ranks except for 1s./6d. per head only a very small mess fee to pay of 150 piastres a week (3/-).
21 the meals were as good as you could get at any hotel thanks to the kitchen cooks. The only work we had to do was make our beds each day — even that needn’t have been done if one didn’t feel inclined. A hundred yards in front of the camp, west fell a small beach six hundred feet high with a steep slope leading down from above. The beach was sandy and the water beautifully clear and warm. The local people (Francophone Settlement) used to go in the water;

In the evenings after the heat of the day we would stroll to the township a mile away and sit at a small table drinking cold orange juice or grapefruit juice or wine or lemonade and watch the local lasses walking up and down the main street. Everyone young and old comes out for a stroll. Fortunately in the cool of the evenings the programme in the
warmer countries seems much the same — work during the mornings, siesta during the heat of the afternoon, and leisure in the cool of the evenings.

On the fourth day we loaded the Jerusalemites in cars and set off for the holy city. It was a very pleasant run of about 50 miles, the road being of first-class bitumen but very twisty owing to the hilly nature of the country. In fact, it was just one mass of hills, most of them stony and rocky with the slopes terraced. They were fairly steep hills too, if there were many sharp corners. I think you would have been sick if you had been especially at the “Seven Settlers” where the road descends very steeply in a series of exceedingly sharp bends. The bus drivers go fairly fast too, just before noon, as they reach our destination — Jerusalem, built on four hills originally, but now spread out over many more with...
very modern & well built stone buildings. It was very taken by the place. It was in fact a pleasant surprise to see such a picturesque city with so many trees. We booked in at the St. Andrew's Hostel (which had previously been an hotel) & had lunch.

At 2 p.m. we boarded a bus to go on the jericho- dead sea trip. Here again we travelled on a first class bitumen road & one couldn't help thinking back 2000 years & picturing the road as it was then rough & dusty. We skirted round of the mound of olives, passing The Garden of Gethsemane on the way. A few miles came to the little town of Bethany, where Lazarus was raised from the dead. We began then to descend the jericho road with the God, for -saken barren hills rising sharply after flat on the right & the hillside in Judea. After the left of the road was the Good Samaritan's
The original structure now being not much more than a heap of stones. One could well imagine the stonemason being put upon by the thieves in this part. The road was very twisting. There were many places in which to hide in order to waylay an unwary traveller.

The flat road to Jericho you wound away to the left, but a new road takes a better route to the level land below. We were shown the site of the original town of Jericho which existed even before the time of Christ. Here not you can see traces of the original wall which surrounded the city (which was only small and covered only a few acres.) A wonderful spring water stems from out of the ground at this spot. The water irrigates the gardens, crops, trees of the modern Jericho, andn. I have seen in my bulbary looking back to the hills, we saw the
The day began with a walk along the Jordan River. After this, we were driven a few miles down to the Allenby Bridge, where we disembarked and walked to the other side of the bridge. I found ourselves in another country of Trans-Jordan. It began to get very hot, and the perspiration ran freely. We were of course some distance below sea level even at this stage, but when half an hour later we were on the shores of the Dead Sea, we were almost 2000 feet below sea level. It was hotter still. Well, the Dead Sea was an amazing place—so to swim in. It gave you a feeling that you are swimming in the midst of an eternal dream. It is impossible to sink. Of course, in fact, it is impossible to swim as one's legs shoot up out of the water. A four-engined British flying boat was riding at another 10,000 feet.
hundred yards from shore.
Fresh water showers are provided to
wash off the salt after a swim.
There is a large café on the
water’s edge, and one can buy cold
drinks— at a price. There were
several Americans there when we
were
The Hostel for dinner at 7.
It had been a wonderful day.
Next morning we visited
the “Church of all Nations” in the
Garden of Gethsemane. One felt
very very humble in this place,
for some reason or other my
thoughts went back to you, Mum! your goodness & sacrifice gave
in bringing us up as children
in the ways you did.
The olive trees in the
Garden must be very very old.
There are eight of them & their
trunks are huge, gnarled &
cracked— yet the trees still
have considerable foliage. In
my album, I have enclosed
a leaf from one of these trees. We returned to the Hostel for lunch and in the afternoon visited Bethlehem, not many miles really from Jerusalem. On the way we passed the Tomb of Rachel on the way. Before we reached Bethlehem we saw down to the left a mile or two away the "Shepherds' Fields" which still this day remain as fields for sheep to graze upon. In Bethlehem is the Church of the Nativity, built over the birthplace of Christ. It seems at first hard to find all the "Holy Places" around these parts built over by churches yet one must remember that half this not been done the original places would have been destroyed or burned. Successive conquerors of the Holy Land of course fired destroy - Jerusalem itself was destroyed several times -
but the Holy Places have escaped destruction. Some of the original structures built over sacred spots in early A.D. have been partly rebuilt, mainly by the Crusaders so that it is impossible to see two floors in places. The old original one in mosaic a foot or more below a more recent one built constructed on the same pattern.

We saw the grotto in the rock — a cave really, where Jesus was born. The original rock is still there, very hard and cold looking. At the back of the fact that there’s a college manor named “Church of the Nativity.” One has to try to forget that the stone walls for I don’t exist — not an easy thing to do.

And our return to Jerusalem we covered on night. At the summit of the Mount of Olives from where a marvellous view was obtained, over all Jerusalem.
looking in the opposite direction, to the Red Sea, a portion of which we could see. The next stop was the British War Cemetery on Mt. Scopus overlooking the city. Such a beautifully laid out and well-kept cemetery I had never seen before. The flowers and shrubs were a delight to the eye. We noted the names of several New Zealand soldiers who lie buried there from the last war. In the center of the area at the back is a beautiful stone memorial chapel designed by a New Zealander by the name of Bell. We spoke with the chaplain - a tall, war man who is in charge of all British war regimented in Palestine.

The next morning we went on a tour on foot of old Jerusalem. I enjoyed every minute of our walk. Our guide was a fine old chap, although he wore a
Nascent flower shop kept out of touch. He belonged to the Christian faith. We entered the city through one of its eight famous gates - the Gaffar Gate. I passed through the gates and less, empty and out of contact with the city in 1917. Well, the old city was a maze of narrow winding streets. It was, in most respects, similar to other native towns of the East - with one noticeable exception. There were so many smells and one wasn't continually being held up to buy something as you walk in Cairo. This was very noticeable. The streets were alive with people. Your mind, all born and raised in the various towns, there were whole streets of vegetable shops, cobbles and stalls on. How again you step aside to let a donkey laden with goods go by. We went this way and go that, ever deeper into the
heart of the old city - surrounding a corner came suddenly to our amazing sight - the Wailing Wall with think are as of ages if both pieces all standing aghast just as they have done for centuries. I say again - it was an amazing sight - it was unexpected as a fall. It gave me a funny feeling - not easily described. There was the wall, some 40 yrs. in length & 30 odd feet high. Most of the original temple wall - & all along its length the wondrous separate from the men, were years of all sages pressed up against the wall & some praying from open prayer books. Some without they took no notice of us standing there - or if they did not care as if did not present our intrusion. Yes, it was an amazing sight.

We next entered the temple area - an expanse of several acres containing among other buildings the big romen "Mosque of DR"
"Omg." Our group had a photo taken on the steps leading up to the mosque. It is in front of my album. Well, this mosque is very large and very beautiful inside. Solomon's famous temple stood quite near here as also did the temple of which Christ charged the money changers. This temple stood not far inside one of the gates in the wall— I have forgotten its name—opposite the garden of Gethsemane (which of course is outside the city wall.)

Near here, we saw the very pool beside which Christ saw the poor old chap who was too crippled to get down into the water—which no doubt possessed miraculous curative properties. The pool was Bethesda. I climbed down some stone steps to get a good look at it (it has been built over & around during the centuries.)
Well, it is there all right with crystal clear water and or three feet deep in it. Long light green streamis doing through a hole in the roof above - made everything quite invisible.

Well, this will be enough for letter No. 2. In my next I will tell you about “Via Dolorosa” “on the Way of the Cross of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre” of the remainder of my wonderful holiday in Palestine.

Love from your son,

Rewai